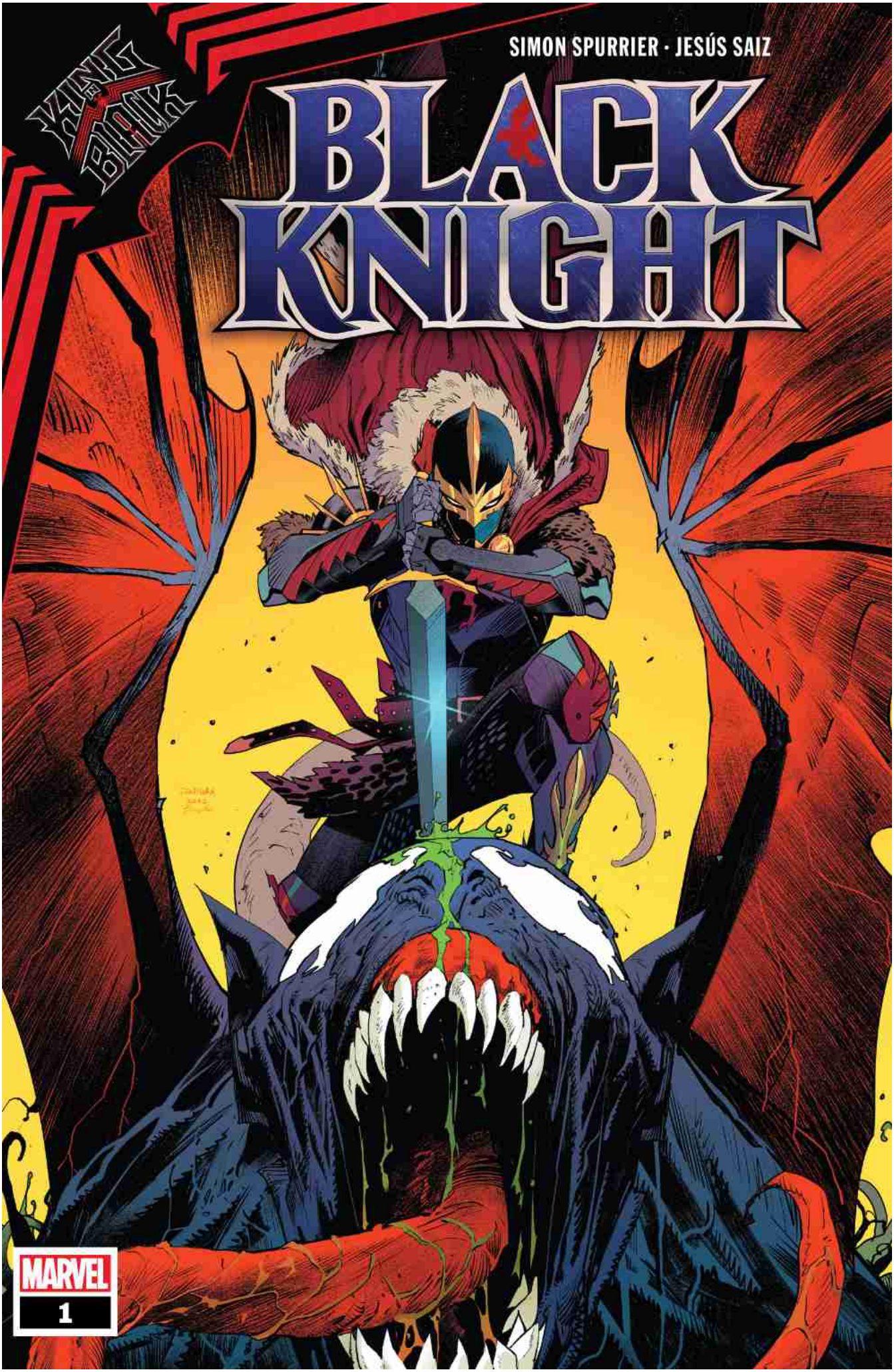
KING IN BLACK
SIMON SPURRIER · JESÚS SAIZ
BLACK KNIGHT
MARVEL
1

KNULL, THE PRIMORDIAL AND MALICIOUS GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES, HAS ARRIVED ON EARTH WITH AN ARMY OF SYMBIOTE DRAGONS. ALL OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE ASSEMBLED TO STOP HIM – BUT SOME OF THEM HAVE NOW FALLEN PREY THE SYMBIOTES' DARK INFLUENCE, AND KNULL'S ARMY ONLY CONTINUES TO SPREAD ACROSS THE GLOBE.

# BLACK KNIGHT

DANE WHITMAN WIELDS THE MAGICAL EBONY BLADE AS THE BLACK KNIGHT. THE SWORD'S POWER COMES WITH A TERRIBLE CURSE – AN INSATIABLE LUST FOR VIOLENCE AND MAYHEM. DANE'S KEPT ITS DARKNESS AT BAY FOR YEARS, USING ITS POWER FOR GOOD AS AN AVENGER AND A HERO.

BUT THE BLACK KNIGHT IS ABOUT TO BE TESTED LIKE NEVER BEFORE... BY THE KING IN BLACK!

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And so the dread hand of fate falls once more upon the **BLACK KNIGHT,** bidding him gird his loins and wax destructive upon the sly serpent of evil.

uh...**NO, NO,** not, um--not **THAT** serpent. that's just some **DRAGON.**
technically more of an **ALIEN SUPER-PREDATOR,** in fact.
no, the **TRUE** fiend--the **TRUE** evil!--lies **HERE,** razor-ravenous within his grip.
whispering its poisonous passions, urging him to **SURRENDER** to its **RED RAGE...**
**BEHOLD,** it hisses, thy armor is sundered...thy **STEED** overthrown...
TWOMP
**HEY!** th-that's my third-best horse, you bastard! those things take **WEEKS** to clone!
you must have **VENGEANCE!** it says. bathe in sweet crimson! **SLAUGHTER ALL THAT LIVES!**
thus commands the accursed **EBONY BLADE,** and thus obtains the lifelong quest of its bearer:
die! **DIE!** D--
to turn its dark edge **AGAINST** evil...

TO FIGHT FOR THE LIGHT WITH DIGNITY AND HONOR--
AAAAAH, MY BUTT PLATES! YOU BENT MY BUTT PLATES!
--AND TO RESIST, UNTO HIS LAST BREATH, THE LONG FALL TO DARKNESS.
AAAAAAAGH--
ALAS, EVERY QUEST HAS ITS, UH--ITS TRIBULATIONS.
SO HERE, PERHAPS, IS A FITTING MOMENT TO PONDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT BROUGHT HIM TO THIS JUNCTURE, WHILE HE... um...
...RE-GIRDS HIS LOINS.
STOP SPINNINGSTOP SPINNINGI'M GONNAPU
AAUUUREH!

'TWAS AT SOMBER GARRETT CASTLE, SEAT OF HIS KIN, THAT FATE FOUND HIM: PONDERING A REMEDY TO THE CURSE.
OH, ANCIENT BLADE, SOURCE OF POWER AND PERFIDY, HEAR MY PRAYER:
PLEEEEEASE STOP MAKING ME WANT TO KILL THINGS! W-WHY CAN'T YOU JUST BE A--A REGULAR MAGIC SWORD? NONPSYCHOTIC! IT'S EMBARRASSING!
WHITMAN! WHERE ART THOU, CRASS HEATHEN?!
DANE WHITMAN-- ATTEND! THY ANCESTOR HAS A QUEST FOR THEE!
OH, JOYFUL VISITOR! SIR PERCY OF SCANDIA: CHAMPION OF AN AGE BYGONE, LINGERING BEYOND FLESH TO GIVE COUNSEL TO HIS HEIRS.
WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT.
FIRST OF THE BLACK KNIGHTS-- CHOSEN BY CUNNING MERLIN FOR HIS PURITY, HIS KINDNESS, HIS PATIEN--
MOVE, SLUGABED! WHAT HAST THOU BEEN DOING WITH THY TIME?
I'VE BEEN--Y'KNOW. MEDITATING AND--SO FORTH.
"MEDITATING." TRULY, THOU ART TOUCHED BY THE MOON.
COME! THOU WOULDST NOT RECOGNIZE KNIGHTLY DUTY IF IT BIT THEE 'PON THY FUNDAMENT. EVIL APPROACHETH FROM THE STARS!
H-HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY KNOW THAT?
BECAUSE THY DEMONIC DEVICE HATH RECEIVED COMMUNIQUÉ!
ALL AVENGERS-ADJACENT WARRIORS ARE SUMMONED TO MUSTER!
"ADJACENT"? WHAT THE HELL? I WAS A FULL MEMBER FOR YEARS! I THOUGHT--I THOUGHT WE WERE READY TO BE TEAM-UP EXCLUSIVE AGAIN!
LOOK TO THE HEAVENS, FOOL!

WHOA. WH-WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?
THE SWORD KNOWS... IT SPEAKS OF ELDER GODS... OF SHADOWS COME FORTH TO ENSLAVE AND ENGULF...
ANOTHER ALIEN INVASION, THEN. -SIGH-
WAIT,... IS THAT-- IS THAT A DRAGON?
NOW, THAT'S MORE FREAKIN' LIKE IT!
WHAT'S THAT ABOUT MY KNIGHTLY DUTIES, Y'OLD GRAVE DODGER? MAN VERSUS DRAGON--THAT'S A STONE-COLD CLASSIC!
WHITMAN-- HOLD! 'WARE THE SWORD!
IT CALLS THEE TO ACT WHEN THOU OUGHT PLAN! WHITMAN!
BUT ALAS TO THE WIND THAT SWALLOWED HIS WORDS, FOR THE KNIGHT LEAPT FORTH REGARDLESS, PURPOSE PURE AND MIND TRANQUIL.
...KILL... KIIIILL...

WITH HINDSIGHT? HE, UHM. HE MIGHT PERHAPS HAVE BEEN A SMIDGE HASTY.
NNF.
W-W-WAIT... TH-THIS GOOPY STUFF...I REMEMBER THIS...
ECHOES NOW... ECHOES OF A BYGONE SAGA...*
...THERE IS A GREAT EVIL ABROAD. THE EBONY BLADE MAY BE ONE OF THE ONLY WEAPONS IN EXISTENCE THAT CAN DEFEAT IT...
...IT IS CALLED... KNULL.
*SEEK YE SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK TO WITNESS THE THRILLING TALE. OUT NOW! --TOMMY G.
HE FANCIES, NOW, HE CAN FEEL THE SWORD SMIRK. IT UNDERSTANDS ITS NECESSITY.
VVVVV
IT KNOWS HE MUST BOW TO ITS PRIMACY--TAKE ITS LEAD--AND SO SURRENDER A LITTLE OF HIMSELF.
CHOOM
IT HURTS HIS HEART.
IN THIS MANNER DOES IT STRENGTHEN.
SLIIISH
YAAAAAAA!
BUT THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE HERE. AN UGLY ANIMA. IT SEEPS, VIRAL, AT THE EMPTY EDGES OF THE BLADE...
...SLINKING FORTH TENEBROUS TENDRILS TO TASTE...HIS...MIND...
KNULL.

YES, KNULL. SPYING THROUGH THE OBSIDIAN FLESH OF THE WYRM.
RUMMAGING THROUGH MIND AND MEMORY. AMUSED AT THE BRIGHT PAGEANTRY OF THE FAMILY MYTH.
...THE BLADE FORGED OF STARSTONE... THE HALF DEMON MERLIN, SEEKING A WARRIOR PURE ENOUGH TO ENDURE ITS THIRST...
...AND FINDING BRAVE PERCY, THAT FIRST DEFENDER OF ARTHUR'S DREAM.
THE STAR-GOD SLITHERS ACROSS THE BLOODLINE... ACROSS FALLEN KNIGHTS AND CORRUPTED KILLERS-- THOSE TOO WEAK TO WITHSTAND THE CURSE.
KNULL CARES NOTHING FOR THEIR SHAME. HE HAS EYES ONLY FOR THE SWORD...
AND THE BLACK KNIGHT SEES, AS THE GREAT BEAST SNARLS ITS LAST AND BEGINS TO FALL--
--THAT KNULL INTENDS TO HAVE THE BLADE...
WH... Y...YOU'RE READING MY MIND...
IT'S--IT'S THIS DAMN MUCK! I-IT'S READING ME TO GET A FIX ON THE SWORD...!

AND THE SWORD...
WANTS...
...TO BE FOUND.
AND SO IT COMES TO PASS THAT THE BLACK KNIGHT, SCOURGE OF TYRANNY, CHAMPION OF JUSTICE, CLENCHES HIS TEETH TO THE SHATTER POINT--
YOU WON'T FIND IT THROUGH ME YOU WON'T FIND IT THROUGH ME
--AND PERFORMS HIS GREATEST FEAT.
HA!
OH.
HIGH ABOVE, A GHASTLY BLACK BLISTER SPREADS ACROSS THE CELESTIAL VAULT, ENCIRCLING THE EARTH IN ITS SHADOW--
AAAAAA!
--AND THE KNIGHT IS GRATEFUL FOR IT. SOMETHING, AT LEAST, TO OCCUPY HIS MIND--
--SO HE NEED NOT WATCH THE EARTH RISE UP TO BREAK HIM.

AAAAA--
(GOT YOU!)*
(YOU CAN, UH...YOU CAN STOP SCREAMING NOW. YOU'RE GETTING PUKE ALL DOWN YOUR BREASTPLATE.)
*TRANSLATED FROM MANDARIN.
WH-WH-WHAT THE HELL IS H--
AH, AMERICAN! WELCOME TO SHANGHAI!
I'M AERO.

WAIT. OH WOW-- THAT HELMET! YOU'RE THE BLACK KNIGHT, AREN'T YOU?
I... Y-YOU... YOU'VE HEARD OF ME?
OF COURSE! YOU WERE FIRED FROM THE AVENGERS BECAUSE YOUR SWORD MAKES YOU ALL MURDERY! PLEASED TO MEET YOU!
WHAT? N-NO, THAT'S-- THAT'S NOT WHAT-- BY MY TROTH, I HAD VALOROUS QUESTS TO--TO QUESTIFY ALONE-- SO--
ALSO, I HEARD YOU STARTED NARRATING YOUR OWN ADVENTURES IN THIS FAKEY OLDE WORLD DIALECT--
WHAT? N-NAY, SWEET MAIDEN, THAT IS N--
--IN AN EMBARRASSING ATTEMPT TO EVOKE SOME SORT OF CHIVALRIC IDYLL--
LISTEN, I THINK MAYBE YOUR ENGLISH NEEDS SOME WORK, BECAUSE--
--IN THE HOPE OF PREVENTING THE BLADE DRIVING YOU SUPERCRAZYPANTS PSYCHO.
THERE'S A WHOLE REDDIT ABOUT IT.
LOOK, THERE'S A SERIOUS SITUATION UNDERWAY. I APPRECIATE YOU, Y'KNOW, SAVING PEOPLE AND SO ON, BUT... I'VE BEEN ACTIVATED BY TONY STARK HIMSELF.
OOH! ME TOO!
WHAT? Y-YOU MEAN, YOU'RE...?
AVENGERS-ADJACENT. THAT'S RIGHT! MY GOODNESS, THERE ARE SO MANY OF THESE CREATURES...
RIGHT. EXACTLY. A-AND I COULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT IF MAYBE YOU JUST HELP ME FIND MY STUPID SWOAAAAAAAA--

YAAAAA!
SLISH
...SWORD.
HE PREFERS SWORD MASTER. ACTUALLY.
〈LIN LIE! HOW ARE YOU?〉
〈AERO. HEY--ISN'T THAT THAT CRAZY EX-AVENGER WHO--〉
〈--WENT FULL SMEAGOL OVER A BIG CLUMSY SWORD? MM-HMM.〉
〈DOES HE KNOW HE'S GOT PUKE ALL DOWN HIS CAPE?〉
〈WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, LIN?〉

(ISN'T IT OBVIOUS? THESE MONSTERS-- THEY'RE MINIONS OF CHIYOU!)
(CHIYOU? YOU MEAN THE-- THE GOD OF WAR FROM THE OLD EPICS?)
HEY, WHAT'RE YOU GUYS TALKING ABOUT? IS IT ME?
IT'S ME, ISN'T IT?
(WHO ELSE BUT CHIYOU WOULD SEND THESE DEMONS? THE HEIR TO THE SWORD OF FU XI MUST FACE THEM!)
(I WILL VANQUISH THE LEGIONS OF CHIYOU! I WILL FIND MY FATHER!)
OKAY, SO THERE'S THIS SYMBIOTE-GOD CALLED KNULL INVADING THE EARTH, AND I THINK MY SWORD'S THE ONLY THING THAT CAN HURT HIS MONSTERS, SO--
SLLLICK
EEEEEEEEE!
(I'M ASSUMING YOU DIDN'T GET A MESSAGE FROM TONY STARK?)
(STARK? THE IRON GUY? COURSE NOT. I'M NOT AVENGERS-ADJACENT.)
SO, UH, A-ANYWAYS-- THE--THE EBONY BLADE. I GOTTA FIND IT. I NEED IT, Y'KNOW? IN A TOTALLY NON-JUNKIE KIND OF WAY.
(HONESTLY? I THINK THESE AMERICAN HEROES ARE ALL IN LOVE WITH THEIR OWN FLAWS. JUST LOOK AT THIS GUY... HE'S NUTS...)
(HE'S NOT THE ONE FIGHTING AN IMAGINARY ENEMY, LIN. THESE MONSTERS AREN'T FROM CHIYOU. IT'S A SPACE THING.)
SOMETIMES IF I COMMAND IT JUST RIGHT--LIKE, REALLY SHOW IT WHO'S BOSS?--IT'LL COME FLYING RIGHT TO MY HAND.

(NOT CHIYOU? BUT THEN-- THERE'S NO POINT IN MY BEING HERE.)
(WHAT?)
MIND YOU, SOMETIMES IT GETS OVEREXCITED AND COMES FLYING TIP-FIRST, SO, UH--YOU MIGHT WANNA GIMME SOME ROOM HERE...
(I MEAN--YOU'VE GOT THIS, RIGHT? YOU'RE AERO! ALL THIS SAVING FOLK'S STUFF IS SECOND NATURE TO YOU. THAT'S WHY THEY LOVE YOU.)
(WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH ANYTHING? IF YOU CAN HELP, YOU SHOULD!)
OH, THRICE-CURSED BLADE, DOOM OF MY PEDIGREE, TRANSMIT THYSELF NOW UNTO MY GRASP!
(LOOK, THE FU XI SWORD ISN'T SOME TOY TO WAVE AT BAD GUYS IN MASKS. IT HAS A NOBLE SPIRIT OF ITS OWN. IT EXISTS SOLELY TO DEFEAT CHIYOU.)
(THAT'S THE OPPOSITE OF NOBLE! A HERO THINKS OF OTHERS FIRST AND THEMSELVES SECOND--THERE'S NOTHING MORE NOBLE THAN TH--)
FLY TO ME! BY THE INCORRUPTIBLE PURITY THAT IS MY BIRTHRIGHT, I COMMAND THEE! IN MY HAND, YOU SHALL FIGHT FOR THE LIGHT!
...
(...HE REALLY IS NUTS, ISN'T HE?)
I CAN FEEL IT... HNN...IT'S--IT'S THAT WAY-- IT'S--
THWIP

UM.
GIVE ME THE SWORD, PLEASE.
BUT I--I DIDN'T TAKE IT. IT JUST-- CAME TO ME.
SWORD. NOW, PLEASE. NOW.
I--I CAN'T. IT WON'T LET GO...
I'M GONNA GUESS THE NOBLE SPIRIT IN YOUR SWORD DISAGREES WITH YOUR IDEA OF HOW TO BEHAVE IN A CRISIS.)
GIVE! BACK! THE SWORD! NOW!
ALL RIGHT, SCREW THIS. THAT KID'S TOO YOUNG TO BE WAVIN' AROUND A PIGSTICKER ANYWAY. I NEED TO GET BACK WHAT'S MINE.
THE EBONY BLADE'S OVER... THERE SOMEWHERE. WE CAN DEFINITELY, DEFINITELY USE IT TO SAVE THE WORLD.
SO, UH. IT'S AERO, RIGHT? YOU GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO BACK UP AN EX-AVENGER?

AND SO IT COMES TO PASS THAT THE BLACK KNIGHT, HAVING SAVED THE WIND-WITCH OF THE EAST, WAS FETED BY HER GRATEFUL PEOPLE.
YOU'RE DOING THAT NARRATING THING, BY THE WAY.
I--I--I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
THIEF! THAT THIEF STOLE MY SWORD!
(AERO!)
(OH MY GOD, SHE'S UH-MAAAZING!)
(GO, AERO!)
(LOOK, IT'S HER!)
(HE'S NOT EVEN HOLDING IT R--)
...
(OH NO.)
SKREEEEEEEE!

THOK
BOOOMFF
(NO POINT IN YOU BEING HERE, HUH?)
(THAT'S MORE LIKE IT, KID.)
THIS SWORD... HRR...HOW, UH... HOW MAGIC IS IT, EXACTLY?
IT'S NOT MAGIC!
IT'S DIVINE!
NOT FIT FOR A CRAZY, PSYCHO AMERICAN! GIVE IT BACK!
I'M NOT A PSYCHO. LIKE--READ THE REDDIT, PAL! ALL THAT DARK STUFF COMES FROM THE EBONY BLADE.

IT CAN CUT THROUGH ANYTHING. NOBODY'S EVER FIGURED HOW POWERFUL IT REALLY IS.
GRAAA!
AND THAT'S THE POINT. WE CAN'T LET THIS KNULL GUY GET HIS HANDS ON IT.
ONLY I CAN WIELD IT SAFELY--AND NOT JUST BECAUSE I'M A PRODIGY AT BLADECRAFT.
(UGH. HE'S STILL HOLDING IT WRONG.)
YOU SEE, THERE'S SOMETHING-- EXCEPTIONAL--ABOUT MY BLOODLINE. SOME NATURAL QUALITY OF-- OF SPIRITUAL PURITY.
UH. MR. BLACK KNIGHT?
'PON MY TROTH, ONLY I MAY CONFOUND THE UNHOLY THIRST OF THE BLADE AND HARNESS ITS IMPOSSIBLE PUISSANCE FOR GOOD!
DANE!
FOR VERILY, I AM THE BLACK KNIGHT, DARK CHAMPION OF VALOR, AND--
DANE, STOP IT! STOP!
S...
STOP WHAT?

YOU WERE, UH. YOU WERE STABBING THAT DEAD MONSTER.
A LOT.
ALSO THESE BUILDINGS. AND THAT CAR.
(I TOLD YOU-- HE'S INSANE. HE BLAMES THIS EBONY BLADE, BUT IT'S HIM.)
FU XI SWORD. NOW.
NO! I NEED IT! I'M--I'M JUST BORROWING IT TILL I GET MINE BACK! IT CHOSE ME!
NNNF! WHY'S IT FEEL SO HEAVY?
I THINK IT'S TRYING TO UN-CHOOSE YOU.
THUM
IIIIIT'S MINE!
ENOUGH. GIVE IT BACK NOW, OR--
GET OFF! GET OFF!
OHCRAP. WAIT.
WAITWAIT WAITWAITNOT AGAINNOTAG--

AND, OH, THERE IS CACOPHONY.
THE BOY'S VOICE, CRYING IN CONFUSION. THE BRAVE KNIGHT'S, MURMURING A PRAYER.
OH GOD OH &#@%& GET OUT GET OUT OF MY HEAD--
AND HIS. KNULL'S. MIRCH-MIRED AND CRUEL AS IT PUNCTURES THEM BOTH...
SOMEWHERE-- AS IF 'TWERE ANOTHER WORLD-- THE MAIDEN CRIES OUT--
<THE DRAGONS ARE...FLOCKING TOGETHER. WH-WHAT ARE THEY DOING...?>
THE KNIGHT HASTENS TO AID HER. HE SPARES NOT A THOUGHT FOR HIS OWN DESIRES--
MINE.
--BUT THE SLITHERING EVIL DRIVES DEEPER INTO HIS BREAST AND BEDEVILS THE VERY BEDROCK OF HIS CREED AND CAUSE...
...POOR LITTLE FOOL. YOU REALLY CAN'T SEE IT, CAN YOU?
THE SWORD, BOY. THE SWORD. I WILL HAVE IT. BUT-- HAHAHA! HOW AMUSING THAT YOU TRULY DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS.
I--I KNOW ENOUGH! A CURSED THING FROM THE STARS, FORGED BY MERLIN TO--
YES, YES, YES. AND HE SOUGHT A WARRIOR PURE TO WITHSTAND ITS THIRST. YOU IDIOT.
I CAN TASTE WHAT'S IN YOUR SOUL BETTER THAN YOU CAN. PURITY? PLEASE.
DID YOU TRULY BELIEVE HE STRUGGLED TO FIND MEN OF PURE HEART IN CAMELOT? HALF THE DAMN PLACE WAS CRAWLING WITH THEM.
NO. THE TRUTH...? WHEN MEN OF LIGHT HELD THE BLADE...WHEN KINGS AND PALADINS TOOK IT UP...
ITS MAGIC DIED.
LIN LIE'S SOUL IS INSPECTED. INCERROGATED. JUDGED...
I WAS LOOKING FOR YOUR LITTLE BLACK SWORD, WHITMAN--BUT I SEE YOU'VE BROUGHT ME A BONUS... HOW GENEROUS...
ANOTHER STAR-FORGED THING...ANOTHER WORLD-ENDER YOU WORMS CAN BARELY COMPREHEND...
CHIYOU, IS IT? HAHAHA... THAT'S YOUR OBSESSION? JUST ONE MORE ELDER SHADOW, DRESSED IN LOCAL LEGEND...
BUT SUCH AN ATTRACTIVE FORM...HMMM.

N-NO, THAT'S, THAT'S NOT WH--
MERLIN LIED. SIR PERCY WAS CHOSEN FOR HIS WEAKNESS.
AN ANGRY MAN. A DEPRESSIVE. A MAN BESET BY VOICES AND VITUPERATION. THAT'S WHAT MERLIN NEEDED.
THAT'S THE LEGACY OF YOUR KIN, BOY. YOU'VE HAD IT WRONG ALL THIS TIME. THE EBONY BLADE CAN ONLY BE WIELDED TO ITS MIGHTIEST POTENTIAL...
...BY THOSE IMPURE OF HEART.
TWO IMPERFECT HALVES. TWO INCOMPLETE ARTICLES, UNITED, TO FORM A BERSERKER IN BLACK.
SYMBIOSIS. THAT IS THE OFFICE OF MY DIVINITY--AND THAT IS WHY YOUR BLADE BELONGS WITH ME.
YOU--YOU CAN'T HAVE IT! YOU'RE WRONG! I'M--I'M NOT A KILLER! I'M PURE OF HEART! THE CURSE IS IN THE SWORD!
IS THAT SO? THEN... OPEN YOUR EYES, LITTLE HERO...

...AND SEE HOW PURE YOU ARE.
AAAAA--!
(IT'S FINE. I'M HERE. YOU-- YOU WEREN'T TO KNOW.)
FWIP
(YOU WEREN'T TO KNOW HE'S EVIL.)
UH... GUYS?

...S-SPEAKING OF EVIL.

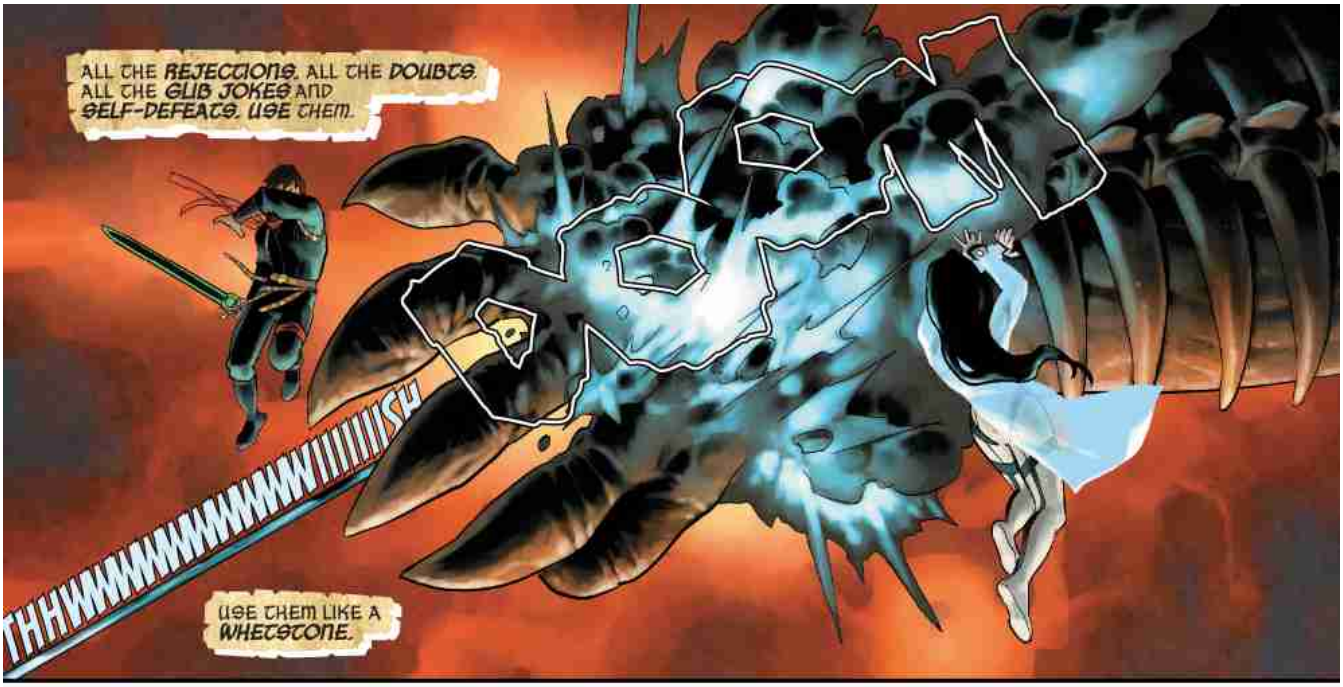
(IT'S CHIYOU! YOU WERE RIGHT! THE GREAT GOD OF W--)
(NO. IT'S JUST KNULL. HE'S BORROWING THE SHAPE TO SCARE PEOPLE.)
NNF.
(WH-WHAT'S IT LOOKING FOR?)
(THERE'S SOMETHING UP THERE... I CAN'T MAKE IT OUT... WHAT'S--)
AT HIS LOWEST... AT HIS MOST BROKEN...
FOOOM
...THAT IS WHEN THE WRETCHED TREASURE CHOOSES TO RETURN TO ITS MASTER.
THOK
IT'S A LIE. IT'S ALL A LIE.
G-GET IT AWAY FROM ME...
(I, UH. I DON'T THINK HE'S GOING TO BE MUCH USE.)
(YOU READY TO BE A HERO, KID?)
(I... DON'T KNOW...)

(BUT I'M READY TO TRY.)
FWOOPH
SSSSSSS
SSSSSS
...DISGUSTING WORMS...THOSE WEAPONS WILL BE MINE...
AAAOOW!
THAK
YAAAAAAAA--! THE LIGHT!
KWOOBP

(ATTABOY. WE'LL HAVE YOU AVENGERS-ADJACENT IN NO TIME.)
(PASS. I DON'T SEE WHY YOU'RE SO HOT ON ALL THAT STUFF.)
(I MEAN-- LOOK. IF HE'S AN EXAMPLE? THEY MUST BE A PACK OF LUNATICS. WE DON'T NEED HIM TO SAVE OUR CITY.)
(AH, HE'S GOING THROUGH SOME STUFF IS ALL.)
(IT'S JUST-- IT'S A DIFFERENT CULTURE. IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING PERFECT. THAT'S THE GOAL, NOT THE JOURNEY.)
HYAAAA!
(I THINK-- SOMEONE LIKE TONY STARK? HE'D SAY...)
...IT'S ABOUT ACCEPTING YOUR FLAWS.
THEN DOING THE RIGHT THING ANYWAY.
AND HERE, AT LAST-- AS UNAVOIDABLE AS 'TIS UNBEARABLE-- LIES THE GHASTLY TRUTH:

THE BLACK KNIGHT ALREADY KNEW.

HE HAS ALWAYS SENSED THE DARKNESS, ASLUMBER IN HIS BREAST.
HAS ALWAYS KNOWN THAT BENEATH THE ARMOR TREMBLES A MAN SWIFT TO ANGER. A MIND MUCH GIVEN TO GRUDGES.
A HEART CRUSHED TOO OFTEN BY WOE-- WITHOUT REASON OR RECOURSE.
HE IS A MAN OF PERFORMATIVE BLUSTER. OF BOMBAST AND BRAGGADOCIO, STRETCHED TAUT OVER SECRET SADNESS.
A MAN PARALYZED IF UNDISGRACED.
AN IMPERFECT MAN.
OH, PITIABLE KNIGHT--LOOK UPON THEM. TRUE HEROES. CHAMPIONS OF THE LIGHT. COULD IT BE THAT THEY SPEAK THE TRUTH?
THAT THE TRUEST FEAT IS NOT TO VANQUISH THY DEMONS...
...BUT TO OWN THEM?


ALL THE REJECTIONS. ALL THE DOUBTS. ALL THE GLIB JOKES AND SELF-DEFEATS. USE THEM.
USE THEM LIKE A WHETSTONE.

(I-IT'S HIM. WH-WHAT'S HAPPENED TO H--?)
FUP
YOU DARE TURN DARKNESS UPON ME?!

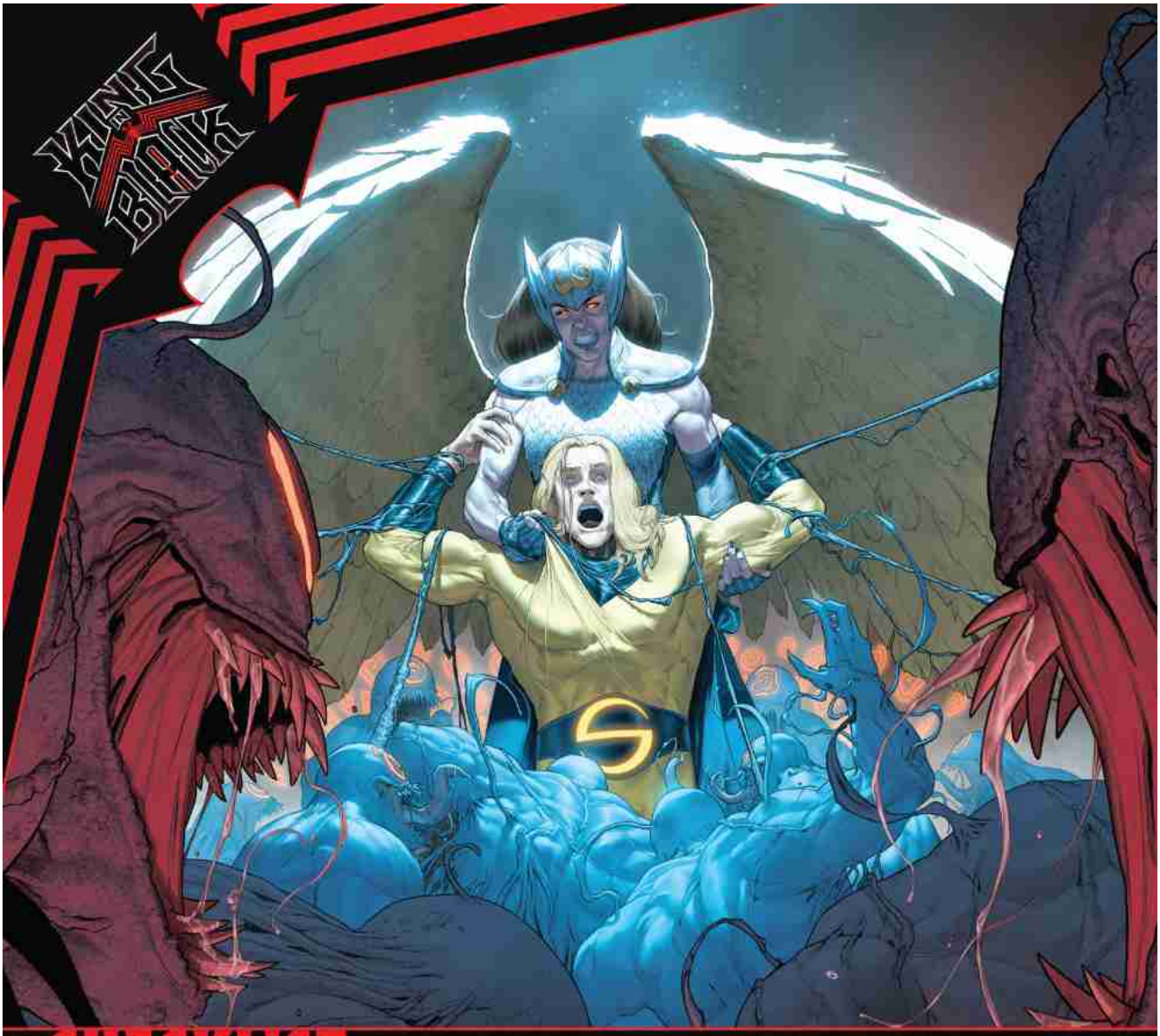
I AM THE DARKNESS!
BUNDLE THEM TIGHT TO THE BLADE AND LET THEM BLEED FORTH WHERE THEY CAN BE SEEN...
PURGED INSTEAD OF RESTRAINED.

(HOLD THE HEAD BACK! HERE HE COMES!)
(I THOUGHT YOU SAID WE DON'T NEED WESTERN HEROES TO SAVE US?!)
(WE DON'T! BUT...THAT'S NOT WHAT HE IS.)
IN THE END, THEN? HIS IS NOT THE SEAT OF VALOR. THE BLACK KNIGHT BELONGS TO NEITHER ROUND TABLE NOR AVENGING ASSEMBLY.
HIS TRUTH IS SIMPLY THIS:

SOMETIMES THE WORLD NEEDS A FOOL PREPARED TO GET LOST IN THE DARK--
YAAAAA--!
--IN ORDER THAT OTHERS MAY BEAR THE LIGHT.

YOUR... YOUR SWORD. IT KILLED HIM. IT KILLED KNULL!
NO.
JUST AN AVATAR. HE'S STILL OUT THERE. EVEN THE EBONY BLADE WON'T BE ENOUGH-- NOT ON ITS OWN.
BESIDES-- IT WASN'T THE SWORD THAT DID THIS, LIN.
IT WAS HIM. A WEAPON'S ONLY AS GOOD AS THE HAND IT'S IN.
SHE'S RIGHT, KID. AND-- THAT BLADE OF YOURS? THAT'S GONNA BE LEGENDARY SOMEDAY.
FOR ALL THE RIGHT REASONS.
L-LISTEN, I WANNA THANK YOU BOTH. Y-YOU'RE A CREDIT TO THE-- I DUNNO--THE GLOBAL HEROING COMMUNITY, SO, UH...
HEY. WH-WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
WHERE DO YOU THINK?
NEW YORK. MR. STARK'S MESSAGE SAID TO GO THERE. THESE THINGS WON'T STOP UNLESS WE BEAT KNULL DIRECTLY.
ARE YOU COMING?

VERILY.
THE BATTLE AGAINST KNULL RAGES ON IN
KING IN BLACK




# CHECKLIST

- [x] **VENOM #33**
  ENTER THE LIGHT!
- [x] **KING IN BLACK: MARAUDERS #1**
  THE SEAS HAVE AWOKEN, AND THE MARAUDERS ARE HERE TO FACE THE RISING TIDE!
- [x] **KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #2**
  MARY JANE FINALLY SWINGS HER AX AT GWEN—BUT NOT THE ONE GWEN EXPECTS!
- [x] **KING IN BLACK: BLACK KNIGHT #1**
  DANE WHITMAN, THE BLACK KNIGHT, LEARNS THE HORRIBLE HISTORY OF HIS LINEAGE AND THE EBONY BLADE!
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #2**
  THE VALKYRIES LEARN MUCH MORE IS AT STAKE THAN JUST EARTH WHEN THEY FIND A LARGE SPIRIT LOOMING ABOVE THE PLANET!
  (PICTURED)
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: BLACK PANTHER #1**
  WAKANDA IS UNDER SYMBIOTE SEIGE!
- [ ] **DAREDEVIL #27**
  DAREDEVIL FACES A CRISIS OF FAITH WHILE HELL'S KITCHEN BURNS!
- [ ] **FANTASTIC FOUR #29**
  A FAMILY DIVIDED CANNOT STAND!
- [ ] **S.W.O.R.D. #3**
  MANIFOLD MUST JOURNEY TO SAVE THE PLANET—AND THE UNIVERSE!
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #2**
  KINGPIN'S THUNDERBOLTS ENLIST THE MOST UNLIKELY ALLY.
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK #4**
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #2**
  AMERICAN KAIJU RISES TO SAVE HIS NATION!
- [ ] **MILES MORALES: SPIDER-MAN #23**
  MILES GOES FIST-TO-FIST WITH ONE OF HIS BEST FRIENDS—CAN HE SAVE THEM?
- [ ] **SAVAGE AVENGERS #18**
  CONAN HAS NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE—CHALLENGE ACCEPTED!
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: CAPTAIN AMERICA #1**
  CAPTAIN AMERICA, FALCON AND THE WINTER SOLDIER HAVE BOOTS ON THE GROUND AGAINST AN ARMY OF SYMBIOTES!
- [ ] **BLACK CAT #3**
  A RACE AGAINST TIME THAT MIGHT COST FELICIA ONE OF HER NINE LIVES!
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #4**
  THE WAVES OF HISTORY CONTINUE TO CRASH ON NAMOR—CAN HE PUT THE LID BACK ON WHEN THE TIME COMES?
- [ ] **SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #4**
  THINGS GET MESSY AS ULIK ENTERS THE FRAY!
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #3**
  WHAT DARKNESS LIES BEYOND VALHALLA FOR THE VALKYRIES?

KING IN BLACK

# NEXT:

**Dane's adventures following "King in Black" will continue in an all-new series by Simon Spurrier and Sergio Dávila! Covers by Stormbreaker Iban Coello!**

## BLACK KNIGHT: CURSE OF THE EBONY BLADE #1

ZONE